

## Minutes by Thomas E. Selfridge, October 1, 1907

Mr. Bell 1907 October 1st,—Tuesday—At Halifax Hotel, Halifax, N. S.

Messrs. Alexander Graham Bell, G. H. Curtiss, F. W. Baldwin, J. A. D. McCurdy and T. Selfridge, 1st Lt. 5th U. S. F. A., met together in the Halifax Hotel, Halifax, N. S., at 11 A. M., Tuesday, October 1st, 1907. They were presented with the following article of agreement which they had signed the previous day before a Notary Public whose signature was duly authenticated by the American Consul General at Halifax, by Dr. Bell.

### **AGREEMENT TO ORGANIZE THE AERIAL EXPERIMENT ASSOCIATION.**

Whereas, the undersigned Alexander Graham Bell of Washington, D. C., U. S. A., has for many years past been carrying on experiments relating to aerial locomotion at his summer laboratory at Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, N. S., Canada, and has reached the stage where he believes that a practical aerodrome can be built on the tetrahedral principle driven by an engine and carrying a man, and has felt the advisability of securing expert assistance in pursuing the experiments to their logical conclusion and has called to his aid Mr. G. H. Curtiss of Hammondsport, 2 New York, an expert in Motor Construction, Mr. F. W. Baldwin, and Mr. J. A. D. McCurdy of Toronto, Engineers, and 1st Lieut. T. Selfridge, 5th Field Artillery, U. S. A., Military Expert in Aerodromics, and

Whereas it has been thought advisable that the undersigned should work together as an Association in which all shall have equal interest, the above named gentlemen giving the benefit of their assistance in carrying out the ideas of the said Alexander Graham Bell, the said Alexander Graham Bell giving his assistance to these gentlemen in carrying out their own independent ideas relating to aerial locomotion, and all working together individually and conjointly in pursuance of their common aim “to get into the air” by the construction of a practical aerodrome driven by its own motive power and carrying a man;

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Now therefore we the undersigned, Alexander Graham Bell, G. H. Curtiss, F. W. Baldwin, J. A. D. McCurdy and T. Selfridge do hereby agree to associate ourselves together under the name of the "Aerial Experiment Association," for the purpose of carrying on experiments relating to aerial locomotion with the special object of constructing a successful aerodrome.

We agree that the "Aerial Experiment Association" 3 shall be organized on the first day of October, 1907, and shall exist for the term of one year from the date of organization unless otherwise determined by the unanimous vote of the members.

We agree that the inventions relating to aerial locomotion made by the members of the Association during the lifetime of the Association shall belong to the Association; and that any applications for letters patent for such inventions shall be made in the names of all the members as joint inventors.

We agree that inventions relating to aerial locomotion made by the members of the Association before the organization of the Association shall belong to the inventors, and not to the Association, unless specially assigned; and that only such prior inventions shall be claimed by individual members as shall be substantiated by the production of written memoranda, drawings, photographs, or models existent before the date of the organization, so that the proofs of prior invention shall not rest on recollection alone, or upon verbal statements unsupported by documentary or tangible evidence of earlier date than the organization of the Association.

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The said Alexander Graham Bell agrees to place his laboratory at Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, Nova Scotia, at the disposal of the Association for the purpose of carrying on experiments relating to aerial locomotion, together with all the buildings, tools, materials, and appurtenances belonging to the Laboratory, without charge, so long as the Association desires to carry on experiments at Beinn Bhreagh: Provided that the

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running expenses of the Laboratory, including the salaries of the Superintendent and men employed shall be paid by the Association during their use of said Laboratory, the number of men employed other than the Superintendent to be at the discretion of the Association, and that any new material or apparatus not in the Laboratory at the date of the organization which may be desired for the use of the Association shall be acquired at the expense of the Association.

We, the undersigned agree to appoint one of our number as Director of Experiment to be our medium of communication with the Laboratory.

We agree that the Laboratory workmen shall receive their instructions from the Superintendent of the Laboratory alone, that the Superintendent of the Laboratory shall receive his instructions from the Director of Experiments alone, and that the Director of Experiments shall receive 5 his instructions by vote of the Association of which he is a member.

We agree that the headquarters of the "Aerial Experiment Association" shall be at Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck Nova Scotia, and that on or before the first of January, 1908, the headquarters of the "Association" shall be removed to some place yet to be determined within the limits of the United States.

This agreement can only be modified by unanimous vote of the undersigned.

Witness our hands and seals at Halifax, Nova Scotia, this Thirtieth Day of September, A. D., 1907.

(Sgd) Wm. L. Payment, (Sgd) Notary Public, Alexander Graham Bell (Seal) Nova Scotia.  
(Sgd) G. H. Curtiss (Seal) (Seal) (Sgd) F. W. Baldwin (Seal) (Sgd) J. A. Douglass  
McCurdy (Seal) (Sgd) T. Selfridge (Seal) 1st Lt. 5th F. A., U. S. A. Authenticated by David  
F. Wilder, Consul General of the United States, September 30, 1907.

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Dr. Bell proposed that the above Agreement be accepted and that they proceed with the organization. This was unanimously agreed to.

The election of Officers was then in order.

It was moved and seconded that Alex. Graham Bell be elected Chairman of the Association. Motion carried unanimously.

In like manner, T. Selfridge was elected Secretary, and J. A. D. McCurdy, Treasurer.

The Association then appointed G. H. Curtiss, Chief Executive and Director of Experiments, and F. W. Baldwin, Chief Engineer.

The duties of the Secretary were further extended to include those of Recorder of Experiments, and Assistant Engineer.

The Association adjourned to meet at the call of the Chairman at Beinn Bhreagh, N. S.

T. Selfridge, Secretary.

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1907 Oct. 2.—Wednesday—at B. B.

The Association met in accordance with the previous adjournment at 8:30 P. M., Wednesday, Oct. 2, 1907.

Present—all the members.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read by the Secretary.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes be accepted. Motion adopted.

The Association then proceeded to the discussion of Ways and Means.

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The Secretary read the following note from Mrs. A. Graham Bell:

Beinn Bhreagh, Near Baddeck, October 2, 1907.

To the Members of the Aerial Experiment Association. Gentlemen:

I am very happy to hear of the organization of the Association, upon the success of which my heart is set.

I shall be glad to advance it funds from time to time as may be requested by the proper officers for the purpose of enabling the Association to carry on experiments relating to Aerial Locomotion, provided the total amount advanced does not exceed, in the aggregate, the sum of Twenty-Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00).

Yours sincerely, (Sgd) Mabel G. Bell.

It was moved and seconded that Mrs. Bell's offer as embodied in the above note be accepted. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that the Secretary be instructed to thank Mrs. Bell for her offer. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that Mrs. Bell be given a 1% interest (one per cent) in all proceeds resulting from the work of the Association for every \$1,000 she contributes. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that no further contributions be accepted, or funds raised, without first applying to Mrs. Bell or members of the Association. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that Dr. Bell's offer of the use of his laboratory, as set forth in the Agreement appearing in the Minutes of the previous meeting, be accepted. Motion unanimously adopted.

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Moved and seconded that the Secretary be instructed to thank Dr. Bell for his offer. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded, that, as funds are desired, the Secretary be instructed by note to notify Mrs. Bell and request her to send check of amount to Treasurer. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that all funds of the Association be deposited to its credit by the Treasurer in such bank as the Association may elect. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that all expenses of the Association be met with by check by the Treasurer. Motion 10 unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that the Association shall select some person, not a member of the Association, to periodically audit the Treasurer's accounts. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that the Treasurer shall be required to give a bond. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that all the Treasurer's checks on the Beinn Bhreagh Laboratory Account shall bear the endorsement of the Director of Experiment. Motion unanimously adopted.

Moved and seconded that the Association adjourn to meet at the call of the Chairman. Adopted.

Association adjourned at 11:45 P. M.

T. Selfridge, Secretary.

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1907 Oct. 3,—Friday—at B. B.

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The Association met in accordance with the previous adjournment at 10:00 P. M.

Present—all the members.

The following suggestions as to salaries were read by the Chairman:

“That Mr. Curtiss, as Chief Executive and Director of Experiment in special charge of motive power, receive \$5,000 per annum.

That Mr. Baldwin as Engineer in Chief in special charge of construction receive \$1,000 per annum.

That Mr. McCurdy as Treasurer and Assistant Engineer in special charge of Photographic Records receive \$1,000 per annum.

That Mr. Selfridge, in accordance with his own suggestion, as he has been detailed here as an observer by the United States government, on full pay, receive no salary.

That Dr. Bell should also serve without compensation as he does not wish to measure the value of his services by receiving a salary.”

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Mr. Curtiss then submitted the following statement, to be read by the Secretary, embodying his views on the matter:

“To the Aerial Experiment Association,—

Having been honored by the appointment of Director of Experiments, I wish to make the following statement:

In the first place, I must say that I am thoroughly in accord with the plan, and feel honored to have an opportunity to associate myself with Dr. Bell, and the men who constitute the

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Association; and also express my admiration of Mrs. Bell, who conceived the idea and made the Association possible. I am sure it will be a success and trust its achievements will fully repay Mrs. Bell for her efforts.

When Mrs. Bell first made known her proposition I was not in a position to devote much time to the scheme, owing to my rather rapidly growing business, which I felt would not be made to pay without my personal and constant attention. In talking over my plans with Messrs. Bell, Baldwin, McCurdy and Selfridge, I stated that I believed arrangements could be made whereby I could give a large part of my time to the undertaking. A plan was formed in which I would take an active part and receive a salary of \$5,000 a year. With this in view I carried on negotiations to transfer my business to a new company which, however, necessitated my giving up a large part of my interest in the business, but enabled me to absent myself much of the time by turning over the brunt of my work to others.

As to the Association, my plan is to devote myself entirely to its interest, with the exception of the time required to handle the important matters of my Company. I shall be at the 'scene of action' as much as possible, but when not, I shall be constantly working to further the interests of the organization.

Aside from the actual necessity of my continued identity with the Curtiss Company, I think it quite desirable that the "Aerial Experiment Association" be in touch with such a company, backed by prominent men with plenty of capital which could take hold of the commercial end of the Association's achievements.

However, if thought advisable as a further incentive for me to give a large part of my time entirely to the Association, I would propose that instead of being paid a fixed salary of \$5,000 a year, I receive only half-pay while not actually at the scene of operations or headquarters of the Association."



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Mr. Baldwin then stated that he was willing to devote his whole time to the interests of the Association, and that \$1,000 per annum, was satisfactory to him.

Mr. McCurdy was also willing to give all his energies to the Association, the sum of \$1,000 therefor being agreeable to him.

Mr. Selfridge then moved that the following salaries be paid by the Association to its members: Mr. Curtiss, \$5,000 per annum, receiving half-pay when not actually at the scene of operations or headquarters of the Association; Mr. Baldwin, \$1,000 per annum; and Mr. McCurdy, \$1,000 per annum. The motion was seconded and adopted.

Moved and seconded that during the absence of any of its members, the Association may appoint a temporary substitute. Motion carried.

Moved and seconded that the Association adjourn to meet at the call of the Chairman. Carried. Association 15 adjourned at 11:06 P. M.

T. Selfridge, Secretary.